

They are frozen in time and sometimes deceptively real. Perpetuated in stone or bronze, looking over water, streets, parks or squares, dog statues can be found all over the world.

Dog Statues

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MICK THE MILLER
Champion Irish Greyhound (1926-39)
Elizabeth O'Kane

“The greatest greyhound of all time.”

Where?

The small village of Killeigh is situated in County Offaly, roughly in the middle of the Republic of Ireland. While the nearby town of Tullamore is world-famous for Tullamore Dew Irish whiskey, the village of Killeigh became known nationwide thanks to Mick the Miller, a Greyhound born in Killeigh in 1926. His statue was unveiled on the village green on January 29, 2011. The beautiful, life-sized bronze stands on a plinth made of stones from the ruins of Millbrook House, where Mick the Miller was born.

The Story Behind the Statue

Mick the Miller (Glorious Event x Na Boc Lei) was born on June 28, 1926. At that time, Greyhound racing had not yet been introduced to Ireland and was only just getting established in England. The first race course in Ireland was opened in Belfast in 1927.

Rev. Martin Brophy, a Catholic priest who served in Killeigh from 1924-30, lived on the edge of the village, in Millbrook House, where Mick the Miller was born. Although the Catholic Church had

no objection to priests having leisure activities, Fr. Brophy called himself “Mr. B. Murphy” on the registration (“the assumed name of an Irish priest....” according to *The Irish Independent*). After all, racing with Greyhounds is a sport for gamblers. Mick the Miller’s pedigree shows B. Murphy as the breeder, and Fr. Brophy as one of three owners.

A Racing Machine

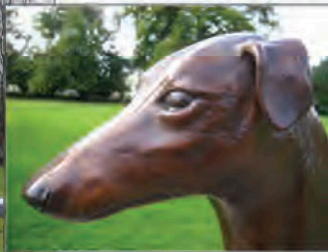
Fr. Brophy’s handyman, Michael Green, recognized in Mick the Miller a Greyhound with a great future. It was an unusual view because Mick was the runt in the litter, and had been stricken with distemper. At a year old, Mick was still a fragile dog but, thanks to excellent treatment and conditioning, and a well-considered training schedule, Mick the Miller developed into a “racing machine.” Of the 20 races in the vicinity of Killeigh, he won 15.

In 1929, Fr. Brophy entered Mick in the English Greyhound Derby – “the most prestigious race on the British Greyhound racing calendar” – in White City (London), where Mick broke the world record, running 525 yards in under 30 seconds. His sensational performance immediately made him a crowd-pleaser. When Mick became the first Greyhound to win this Derby twice, in 1929 and 1930, he earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records.

After the 1929 win there was overwhelming interest in buying Mick the Miller. On the stairs of the race course,



Life-sized bronze of Mick the Miller, considered one of the greatest Greyhounds of all time on the Village Green in Killeigh, Ireland.



...thanks to excellent treatment and conditioning, and a well-considered training schedule, Mick the Miller developed into a “racing machine”

HISTORY – MICK THE MILLER

Mick the Miller's six-generation pedigree can be found here:

<http://www.greyhound-data.com/d?d=Mick+the+Miller&sex=&color=BD&birthyear=1950&birthland=IE>

Mick was sold to Albert Williams. Within a year, Williams sold Mick the Miller to Arundel H. Kempton, a bookmaker from London. Then Mick won the English Greyhound Derby for the second time, now closely watched by 50,000 spectators, including King Alfonso XIII of Spain.

Celebrity

Mick became a crowd-pleaser and a celebrity. During the racing season, he lived at Wimbledon, in the kennels of his trainer, Sidney Orton. The hectic racing schedule was taking its toll but, after a long period of rest, Mick was back in action in the spring of 1931. At more than five years old, Mick ran in the St. Leger Stakes at Wimbledon, which he won.

Again he was unbeatable, until the Spring Cup at Wembley, when his old strength seemed to have vanished. Nevertheless, in the twilight of his career, Mick still had an army of fans. The speed record for Greyhounds has been broken since Mick the Miller's time, but he is still considered one of the greatest Greyhound racers of all time.

Mick ran in 68 track races and won 51 of them for nearly £10,000 in prize money. He won the Derby twice, the St. Leger Stakes, the Cesarewitch and the Welsh Derby. He set six world records (530 yards three times, 550 yards once and 600 yards twice) and became the poster dog for Greyhound racing.

Michael Tanner, the author of *Mick the Miller, Sporting Icon of the Depression*, called Fr. Brophy "a gambling-mad priest."

£20,000 in Stud Fees

After his racing career, Mick lived for eight years with Jack Masters on Mill Farm, in Dereham, Norfolk. He was a popular stud dog, siring 109 puppies (his litter brother, Macoma, sired 84), and a sought-after celebrity for various events, such as the opening of the Catford Stadium in London. When the London department



Left to right: Father Brophy with Macoma, Mick the Miller's litter brother; Mick the Miller and Michael Green.
Photo circa 1929

store Selfridges opened a roof garden, Mick the Miller was a VIP guest. In 1934, Mick starred in the movie *Wild Boy*.

After earning £20,000 in stud fees, Mick returned to the Burhill Kennels of his old trainer Sidney Orton. Mick died in May 1939, at almost 13 years old.

His owners, Phyllis and Arundel Kempton, donated his body to the Natural History Museum in London, to be displayed as a mounted specimen. In 1995, the London museum's dogs display was moved to the Natural History Museum in Tring, Hertfordshire. <http://piclib.nhm.ac.uk/results.asp?image=056537>

Commemoration

In the 1990s, the Royal Doulton porcelain factory produced a limited edition of 7,500 Mick the Miller figurines. Mick also has a Facebook page, a song (by Emmett Doyle) and a ballad (by Danny Coughlan) dedicated to him.

In 2008, a Mick the Miller Commemoration Committee was formed with a view to honoring him in his birth village. From the beginning it was decided that only the best would be good enough for Mick the Miller: a life-sized, bronze statue. The funds came from the local tradespeople, and donations by inhabitants of Killeigh and Greyhound fanciers. The Irish Greyhound Board contributed £7,000.

The Sculptor

In November 2009, the committee invited Elizabeth O'Kane to create the statue, because of the quality of her work and her specific interest in Greyhounds. Elizabeth's father and grandfather were well-known Greyhound owners <http://www.elizabethokane.com/>.



Mick the Miller photographed in 1932 with his owner, Mrs. Arundel Kempton, and two of his descendants. This photo was published on the front page of *The Tatler*, a fashion and lifestyle magazine.

In order to create the statue, O'Kane visited the museum in Tring, which gave her the opportunity to measure Mick and study its anatomy. The committee gave her every image of Mick the Miller they could find.

The statue was unveiled on January 29, 2011 by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, Brian Cowen, and attended by about 400 Killeigh residents and Greyhound fanciers.

Something About Greyhounds in America

The Greyhound Club of America is the national breed club within the American Kennel Club. The GCA promotes responsibility in breeding Greyhounds, as well

HISTORY – MICK THE MILLER



In 1934, Mick the Miller starred in the movie Wild Boy. The film was recorded in the Gainsborough Studios in London.

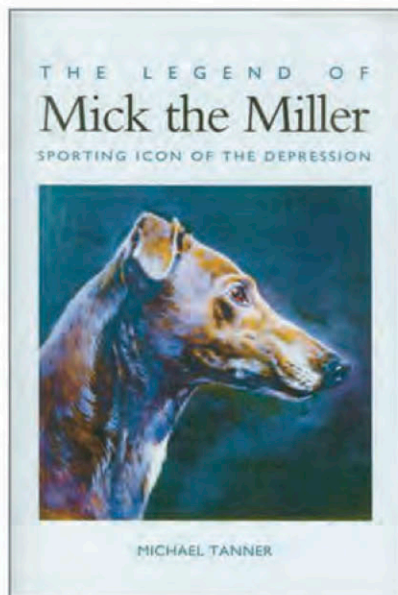
as in training and showing them in a variety of activities.

The greyhound is an ancient breed mentioned in the Bible (Proverbs 30:31), by Ovid (43 BC to AD 17), and by Lucius Flavius Arrianus (Arrian), who described them 2,000 years ago. In America, greyhounds or similar dogs can be traced back to the 1500s. During the 16th century, explorers from Spain took their various dog breeds with them in order to defend themselves and intimidate the original inhabitants. During the American Revolution, George Washington was always accompanied by his Greyhound Azor.

Eighteen Greyhounds were exhibited at the Westminster Kennel Club Show in 1877. The breed was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1885. One of the first national coursing meets was held in Kansas in 1886.

Magnificent Canine Athletes

Greyhound racing as it is today, was the brainchild of Owen Patrick Smith who developed a lure that could run on an oval track. It was the beginning of an official sport for several sighthound breeds. The first Greyhound racing track was opened in Emeryville, California in 1919. The Greyhound Racing

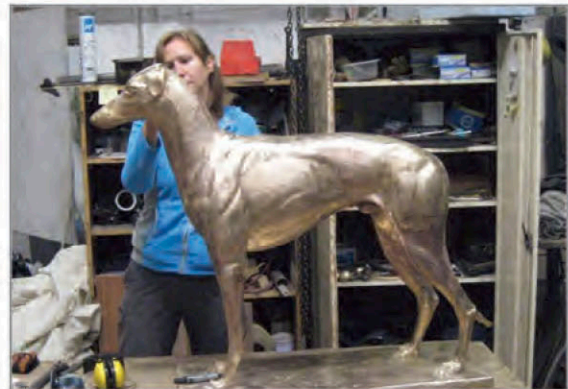


*Michael Tanner's book
The Legend of Mick the Miller*

All Mick the Miller's race wins can be found at:
<http://www.mickthemiller.com/Achievements.htm>

Association of America website has an interesting article about the history of Greyhound racing:
http://www.gra-america.org/the_sport/history.html.

In his book *Born to Run, the racing Greyhound from competitor to companion*, Greyhound owner and adoption advocate Ryan H. Reed examines the world of racing Greyhounds.



Mick the Miller statue in the foundry of Elizabeth O'Kane



In the 1990s, the Royal Doulton porcelain factory produced a limited edition of 7,500 Mick the Miller figurines.

*Come all of you sportsmen, and listen to this ditty
It's about Mick the Miller come to the White City
– Emmett Doyle*

*Let's sing the praises of this dog,
Sing them low and high.
Let's give three cheers to good old Mick
As he goes flying by!
– Danny Coughlan*